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TAGS: [PREL](#) [NI](#) [OAU](#) [ECOWAS](#)

SUBJECT: KOUYATE ON OAU ELECTION

Classified by Ambassador Howard F. Jeter, reason 1.5 (b/d).

(C) 1. Summary. Ambassador met with ECOWAS Executive Secretary Kouyate on July 27. Kouyate briefly handicapped

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the recent election for the final Secretary General of the OAU after discussions of other issues. He claimed that he had been vigorously opposed by Qadhafi of Libya, and was leading in the vote count very late in the proceedings, until an unnamed Head of State turned against him. Kouyate also discounted any effort to appoint him to a second term as ECOWAS Executive Secretary. Disappointed at his failure to win the OAU election, he said he has no immediate plans for his future. End Summary.

12. (C) Ambassador Jeter met with ECOWAS Executive Secretary Lansana Kouyate in Abuja on July 27. After discussions on accreditation of the American Ambassador to Nigeria to the ECOWAS Secretariat, and review of several regional issues (septels), Kouyate handicapped the recently-concluded election of the final Secretary General of the OAU. Kouyate claimed that he had been leading in unofficial vote counts up to the final hours of the vote. "Qadhafi was against me," he said, due to Qadhafi's very poor relations with President Conte of Guinea. Kouyate also suggested that an unnamed Head of State, previously his supporter, turned against him at the last minute, costing him significant support among other states.

13. (C) Speaking briefly on his own future, Kouyate said he would soon begin to "look around," but had not really focused yet on his next professional incarnation. He discounted the possibility of serving a second term as the Executive Secretary of ECOWAS, noting that the tradition had been two

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successive terms for each ECOWAS nationality at the helm of the Secretariat, and he had been preceded by another Guinean national, Edouard Benjamin. (Comment: President Obasanajo has off-handedly told us that he would like to see Kouyate continue for another term, but this is probably an indication of Obasanjo's high regard for Kouyate, rather than a GON intention. End Comment). Kouyate made no mention of a possibility he had disclosed to us previously, that of Prime Minister in Guinea (which he had dismissed at the time, given what he considered his problematic relationship with Conte).

14. (C) Comment. Kouyate, obviously disappointed by his failure to be elected OAU Secretary General, kept a stiff upper lip with us, focusing on the issues at hand within ECOWAS and the Secretariat, and laughing, somewhat ruefully, at his defeat in Lusaka. He genuinely appears to have no immediate plans for the future. End Comment.

Jeter